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IN THE CLAIMS:

Applicants have canceled claims 3, 20, 23, and 25, without prejudice or disclaimer, amended claims 1, 5, 6, 19, and 24, and presented new claims 26-28. All pending claims are presented below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings in the application.

① 1. (currently four times amended) An isolated protein characterized by an ability to form a complex with receptors of the Tumor Necrosis Factor ("TNF") superfamily including the cytoplasmic domain of CD40 as determined by a yeast two-hybrid interaction assay or a co-immunoprecipitation assay, said isolated protein comprising ~~an amino acid sequence having 70-100% homology to the amino acid sequence~~ amino acids 54-140 of SEQ ID NO: 2 or a fragment thereof of at least 10 amino acids in length and able to form said complex ~~said isolated protein characterized by an ability to form a complex with receptors of the TNF superfamily including the cytoplasmic domain of CD40.~~

Claim 2 (previously canceled).

Claim 3 (currently canceled).

Claim 4 (previously canceled).

② 5. (currently three times amended) The isolated protein of claim 1 wherein said isolated protein is a fragment, ~~said fragment~~ comprising the amino acids 54-362 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

③ 6. (currently four times amended) The isolated protein of claim 1 wherein said isolated protein is a fragment comprising the amino acids ~~274-362~~ 54-273 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claims 7-18 (previously canceled).

④ 19. (currently three times amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the isolated functional protein of claim 1 or a functional fragments fragment thereof of at least 10

amino acids in length and able to form said complex, and
a pharmaceutical acceptable carrier material.

Claim 20 (currently canceled).

Claims 21 and 22 (previously canceled).

Claim 23 (currently canceled).

(5) 24. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the isolated protein of claim 5 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier material.

Claim 25 (currently canceled).

(6) 26. (new) The isolated protein of claim 1 wherein said isolated protein is a fragment comprising the amino acids 54-236 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

(7) 27. (new) A composition comprising the isolated protein of claim 6 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier material.

(8) 28. (new) A composition comprising the isolated protein of claim 26 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier material.